

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PM-07 DODE-00 L-03 H-03 SSO-00

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NSAE-00 RSC-01 IGA-02 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-19 /137 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:RSBARRETT - NEA:SSOBER:JR

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON

AF - MR. MULCAHY

PM - MR. VEST

NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS

DOD/ISA - MR. BADER (PHONE)

DOD/DSAA-MR. VIOLETTE(DRAFT)

L/PM - MR. MICHEL

H/MR. SCHNEE

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O R 190013Z JUL 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T STATE 156317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET, SA, IR, US

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN REQUEST FOR IRANIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REFS: (A) TEHRAN 5718 (B) JIDDA 2613 (NOTAL)

(C) RABAT 2114 (NOTAL) (D) STATE 100827 (NOTAL)

(E) JIDDA 2554 (NOTAL) (F) STATE 90234 (NOTAL)

(G) ADDIS ABABA 7814 (H) TEHRAN 5826

1. ASSESSMENT: ALTHOUGH EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE WAS
UNTIL THIS YEAR ABLE TO EXERCISE ALMOST COMPLETE CONTROL
OVER ETHIOPIA THERE HAS LONG BEEN DISCONTENT WITH THE
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SLOW PACE OF MODERNIZATION IN THE COUNTRY. THIS
DISCONTENT ERUPTED IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH OF THIS YEAR
IN A SERIES OF STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS BY LABOR,
STUDENTS, AND THE MILITARY. THESE DISORDERS RESULTED

IN THE INSTALLATION OF THE PRESENT CABINET HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER ENDALKATCHEW MAKONNEN, OSTENSIBLY COMMITTED TO THE INITIATION OF A WIDE PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENTAL REFORM, AND TO THE TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT OF 25 ALLEGEDLY CORRUPT GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS ARRESTED DURING THE COURSE OF THESE EVENTS.

2. THE ENDALKATCHEW GOVERNMENT MOVED VERY SLOWLY ON BOTH THESE FRONTS AND THE MILITARY GREW INCREASINGLY DISSATISFIED. A SERIES OF INCIDENTS AT THE END OF JUNE

TRIGGERED THEM INTO ACTION. THEY OCCUPIED TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTERS ON JUNE 28 AND PROCEEDED TO ARREST SOME FIFTY MORE CONSERVATIVE AND ALLEGEDLY CORRUPT OFFICIALS, ACCUSING THEM OF CORRUPTION DURING THE PREVIOUS REGIME AND OF HAMPERING THE ENDALKATCHEW GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE OF ITS MISSION.

3. SINCE RETURNING TO THE POLITICAL SCENE THE MILITARY HAVE KEPT UP A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND HAVE MET WITH THE EMPEROR TO WHOM THEY PROCLAIM LOYALTY. THE MILITARY DISCLAIM ANY INTEREST IN FILLING MINISTERIAL POSITIONS, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL NOT, AS THEY DID PREVIOUSLY, WITHDRAW FROM THE POLITICAL ARENA AFTER THIS INTERVENTION AND RELY ON THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT THEIR WISHES, BUT WILL INSTEAD CLOSELY MONITOR ITS ACTIVITIES AND KEEP PRESSURE ON IT TO GET ALONG WITH ITS PROCLAIMED TASKS.

4. THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MILITARY SINCE JUNE 28 HAVE BEEN DIRECTED BY AN "ARMED FORCES COORDINATING COMMITTEE (AFCC) COMPOSED OF ENLISTED MEN, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND OFFICERS UP TO THE RANK OF MAJOR. LITTLE IS KNOWN OF THE POLITICAL BENT OF THE AFCC MEMBERS. THERE MAY BE SOME RADICALS AMONG THEM BUT THEIR ACTIONS AND WORDS SO FAR REFLECT MODERATION, ORDER, AND DISCIPLINE. AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF AFCC AIMS
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CALLS ON TOURISTS TO CONTINUE TRAVELLING TO ETHIOPIA AND ON FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR INVESTMENTS, AID, AND DROUGHT RELIEF PROGRAMS. THERE HAS BEEN NO BLOODSHED, THE CITIES HAVE BEEN ORDERLY AND CALM, AND NO FOREIGNERS HAVE BEEN BOTHERED.

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE CERTAINLY HAD CONSEQUENCE OF REDUCING EMPEROR'S AUTHORITY IN HIS COUNTRY AND A LARGE NUMBER OF DISSIDENT ELEMENTS, INCLUDING FACTIONS OF THE MILITARY, ARE NOW COMPETING TO SEE HOW MUCH OF THE POWER VACUUM THEY CAN FILL. WE ARE NOT ABLE TO PREDICT A LONG TENURE FOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HEADED BY CONSERVATIVE ENDALKATCHEW, BUT MOST LIKELY SUCCESSOR

GOVERNMENT WOULD BE UNDER MILITARY INFLUENCE AND PROBABLY OF MODERATE ORIENTATION. THERE ARE RADICAL ELEMENTS IN ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE, BUT WE BELIEVE ARMY AND NOT AIR FORCE WOULD DOMINATE ANY SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT. OTHER RADICALS SUCH AS STUDENTS HAVE LITTLE OR NO CHANCE OF COMING TO POWER.

6. WE BELIEVE LONG-TERM ORIENTATION ADDIS REGIME LIKELY BE BEST INFLUENCED AT THIS JUNCTURE BY HELP FROM FRIENDS.

EVEN IF THIS CABINET DOESN'T SURVIVE, THE NEXT GOVERNMENT WILL BE DEPENDENT TO EVEN GREATER EXTENT ON MILITARY FOREBEARANCE. IN ESSENCE IT IS COUNTRY OF ETHIOPIA THAT IS WORTHY OF SUPPORT AS IT STRUGGLES WITH ITS CURRENT DIFFICULTIES AND TRIES TO WORK OUT ITS FUTURE. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT WISH TO TRY TO TELL GOI WHAT IT OUGHT TO DO ABOUT EMPEROR'S REQUEST FOR MASSIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WE BELIEVE IRAN HAS IMPORTANT INTEREST IN ETHIOPIAN STABILITY: (A) STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF HORN HAS SHIFTED OUT OF A CONTINENTAL AFRICAN CONTEXT INTO AN INDIAN OCEAN COMPLEX AND ITS RELATION TO THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND PERSIAN GULF; (B) ORIENTATION OF HORN AREA IN GENERAL WILL HAVE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE BECAUSE OF ITS PROXIMITY TO TANKER ROUTES; AND (C) OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS IN AREA WOULD BEST BE SERVED BY CONTINUED PRESENCE OF A FRIENDLY REGIME IN ETHIOPIA.

7. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT (IEG) HAS MADE URGENT APPEAL
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OF USG FOR INCREASED MILITARY ASSISTANCE BECAUSE OF MILITARY DISPARITY WITH SOMALIA IN OGADEN AND IRRESISTIBLE PRESSURES FROM MID-LEVEL OFFICERS OVER REGIME'S FAILURE TO REDRESS BALANCE. WHILE WE DO NOT SHARE IEG'S ASSESSMENT THAT SOMALIA ABOUT TO LAUNCH MILITARY ADVENTURE IN OGADEN, FACT IS THAT WITH RECENT SOVIET DELIVERIES OF 15 MIG-21 AIRCRAFT AND SERIOUS IMBALANCES IN ARMOR, SOMALIS DO HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE IN THESE EQUIPMENT CATEGORIES. SOMALIS, HOWEVER, HAVE SERIOUS SHORT-COMINGS IN MAINTENANCE AND LOGISTICS THAT ARGUE AGAINST DIRECT MILITARY ATTACK, ALTHOUGH RESURGENCE OF OGADEN INSURGENCY ALWAYS POSSIBLE. WE TEND TO PUT MORE WEIGHT ON POLITICAL PRESSURES ADDIS REGIME APPARENTLY UNDER BECAUSE OF MILITARY IMBALANCE AND DISSATISFACTION AMONG ETHIOPIAN MILITARY GENERATED BY NEW SOVIET ARMS IN SOMALIA. CONSEQUENTLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP IEG AS BEST WE CAN AND WE CURRENTLY REVIEWING IEG REQUEST OF DOLS 155 MILLION OF URGENTLY NEEDED EQUIPMENT. BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL DOLS 40 MILLION CEILING ON TOTAL MILITARY AID TO AFRICA, MOST USG CAN CONSIDER IS PRESENTLY PLANNED FY 74 GRANT PROGRAM OF ABOUT DOLS 12 MILLION AND DOLS 10 MILLION IN CREDIT. INDICATIVE OF LEVEL OF REGIME'S ANXIETY IS PROFESSED

WILLINGNESS PAY CASH FOR ITEMS FOR WHICH WE NOT ABLE
PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

8. AS RESULT OF RECENT HIGH LEVEL DECISIONS, 11 M-60
TANKS, 12 155MM SP HOWITZERS, 28 M-113 APC'S, 12 VULCAN
ANTI-AIRCRAFT CANNON AND 6 TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILE LAUNCHERS
ARE BEING TAKEN FROM U.S. ACTIVE ARMY UNITS FOR

EXPEDITED SHIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA. THE IEG HAS BEEN
INFORMED THAT U.S. CANNOT PROVIDE F-5 AIRCRAFT SINCE
NONE ARE IN U.S. INVENTORY AND CANNOT REASONABLY
DIVERT ADDITIONAL M-60 TANKS FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY.

9. FORTY MILLION CEILING MEANS THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR
ETHIOPIA TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT AT THIS
TIME IS TO USE ITS CASH RESERVES OR TO SEEK THE AID
OF INTERESTED THIRD PARTIES. WE HAVE CONVEYED THIS TO
ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS DURING WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS,
AND REFTELS (E) AND (F) REFLECT PAST ATTEMPTS BY THE
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ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO FIND ALTERNATE SOURCES FOR
FINANCING MILITARY PURCHASES. USG WELCOMES THE ETHIOPIAN
INITIATIVE IN SEEKING AND OBTAINING SUCH FINANCING
FROM FRIENDLY THIRD PARTIES, SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA OR
IRAN.

10. FOR ADDIS: SINCE RECEIPT OF REF (A) ETHIOPIAN
AMBASSADOR HAS CALLED TO CONVEY SAME INFORMATION ABOUT
FOREIGN MINISTER ZEWDE'S TALKS IN TEHRAN AND IRANIAN
INTEREST IN CONSULTING USG. HE ALSO TOLD US ZEWDE
WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE GOING TO SAUDI ARABIA.

11. FOR TEHRAN: YOU SHOULD TELL KHALATBARY THAT WE
AGREE WITH THE SHAH'S VIEW THAT A STABLE, SECURE ETHIOPIA
IS CRITICAL TO THE WELL BEING OF THE AREA. WE ARE OUR-
SELVES DOING AS MUCH AS WE CAN TO BE RESPONSIVE TO
ETHIOPIAN REQUESTS ON MILITARY SUPPLY, ALTHOUGH IN THIS
REGARD WE ARE INHIBITED BY LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS.
(YOU MAY DRAW ON PRECEDING ANALYSIS, TO EXTENT YOU DEEM
NECESSARY, TO EXPLAIN OUR PROBLEM.) YOU SHOULD SAY WE
WELCOME THE SYMPATHETIC INTEREST SHOWN BY GOI, AND WE
WOULD WELCOME A POSITIVE IRANIAN RESPONSE TO ETHIOPIAN
REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE. THIS IS A MATTER WHICH WE
BELIEVE SHOULD BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN IRAN AND ETHIOPIA.
SHOULD THE FORM OF IRANIAN ASSISTANCE BE RAISED, YOU CAN
SAY THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH FOREGOING ANALYSIS, ETHIOPIA
WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WELCOME FINANCIAL HELP. IF THE
QUESTION OF THE TRANSFER OF U.S.-ORIGIN ARMS SHOULD COME
UP, YOU SHOULD REPLY THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO EXAMINE
ANY PROPOSALS BY IRAN ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS AND,
ALTHOUGH YOU ARE NOT IN POSITION TO GIVE SPECIFIC
RESPONSE IN ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC REQUEST, YOU CAN ASSURE

KHALATBARY THAT WE WOULD CONSIDER URGENTLY ANY PROPOSAL
IRAN MIGHT DECIDE TO PUT TO US.

12. THE OVERALL IMPRESSION YOU SHOULD SEEK TO LEAVE WITH
KHALATBARY IS THAT WE ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE SHAH'S
INTEREST IN HELPING ETHIOPIA AND THAT WE BELIEVE A GOOD
CASE EXISTS FOR SUCH HELP. BEYOND THAT, THE DECISION IS
ONE THAT MUST BE MADE BY HIM, AND WE WOULD NOT WISH
TO BECOME INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH
IRAN AND ETHIOPIA MAY HAVE ON THIS SUBJECT (APART FROM
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NEED TO CONSIDER APPROVING IRANIAN TRANSFER OF US-ORIGIN
ARMS SHOULD IRAN WISH TO GO THAT ROUTE). INGERSOLL

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